



INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION

AFI PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION REGIONAL GROUP FIFTEENTH MEETING (APIRG/15)

(Nairobi, Kenya, 26 – 30 September 2005)

Agenda Item 4: Air Navigation and Aviation Security (AVSEC) Issues
4.3: Air Traffic Management (ATS, AIS & SAR)

SEARCH AND RESCUE IN THE AFI REGION

(Presented by AFCAC)

Summary

This working paper presents the result and perspective of the AFCAC/ICAO technical cooperation project in the field of Search and Rescue being implemented pursuant to the AFCAC Resolution S16 – 7 and provides the progress made since APIRG/14. This paper provides also information on separate initiatives taken by States in SAR field.

References:

- International aeronautical manual on Search and Rescue (IAMSAR)
- Annex 12 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation
- AFCAC/16 - Report
- AFCAC/17 - Report
- First AFCAC/ICAO SAR Project Evaluation Meeting - Report
- APIRG/14 – Report
- Saly Portudal (Senegal) Declaration

1. Introduction

1.1 Recent air tragedies have seriously reminded the African aviation community on how it was essential to have an efficient search and rescue systems in Africa.

1.2 In fact, ICAO Contracting States have the responsibility to implement an efficient SAR system in compliance with the provisions of the Annex 12 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation.

1.3 Yet, there are many shortcomings in that area in most African States.

1.4 In light of the above, AFCAC decided to implement a large project and upgrade search and rescue services in Africa.

1.5 The shortcomings identified by the various reports and ICAO meetings in SAR concern mainly search and rescue services in Africa:

- Obsolete and ill-adapted nature of the regulatory framework;
- Deficient structures and organization of SAR services;
- Limited human and material resources; and
- Lack of exercises.

2 Current situation

2.1 Pursuant to the implementation of the Resolution S16 – 7, the Government of France, the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC) and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) signed on 31 January 2002 a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in order to improve SAR services in Africa, this reducing the likelihood of any loss of life that may be attributed to ineffective SAR response.

2.2 In accordance with the above mentioned MoU, a SAR technical cooperation project is being implemented in Africa. This project is managed by AFCAC and ICAO and funded by the French Ministère des Affaires étrangères, Coopération et Francophonie. From March 2003 to June 2005, twenty one States out of thirty – seven that so far volunteered have received a SAR evaluation mission among which 5 have submitted a request for technical assistance from which 2 have been assisted. SAR evaluation missions will be conducted in the remaining States already participating in the project. All the costs related to the evaluation missions, including salary of the experts and travel expenses, are borne by the project.

2.3 Taking due account of this alarming situation and given the number of lives which could be saved through implementation of more efficient SAR systems in Africa, AFCAC initiated action made up of three phases:

- Evaluation of shortcomings and deficiencies of SAR systems in Africa;
- Processing legal and organizational aspects of future search and rescue systems in Africa; and
- Implementation of these systems, including the possible purchase of equipment.

2.4 The funding of the two first phases of this project is secured from a donor State.

2.5 The evaluation relates to:

- The regulations in force (national regulations and international agreements);
- SAR services structures and organization;
- Available means (material, human and financial); and
- The assessment of possible exercises or situation of real crises.

2.6 The evaluation methodology leans on:

- ICAO reports (States' visits, meetings);
- The dispatching of a questionnaire to the SAR Coordinator in each State and SAR region (SRR); and
- State visit.

2.7 Following the conclusions of this evaluation, an action plan will be implemented. This action plan, subject to adaptation to specific requirements highlighted through the evaluation, would comprise several phases as follows:

- Updating of the regulatory framework;
- Making current the organizational structures;
- Training/validation of local expertise;
- Exercises organization;
- Staging one workshop/study on the financing modes of SAR activities, notably within the framework of a sub-regional approach; and

Evaluation of actions and achievements.

2.3 In this regard, States that have been evaluated have started requesting assistance. The assistance offered in the framework of the project will be free of charge to the beneficiary States. Upon request, missions can be organized to provide assistance in upgrading the SAR legal and organizational framework, arrange SAR exercises, sensitize national SAR stakeholders, organize multilateral meetings to develop international SAR agreements, and deal with any other weaknesses identified during the State evaluation phase.

3 Outcome of the AFCAC 17th Plenary Session

3.1 The 17th AFCAC Plenary Session held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 10 to 14 May 2005 recommended that for States remaining to join the project may wish to consider the benefits under this project and take advantage of the many opportunities affecting the project. States which are interested should apply to the AFCAC Secretariat or to the Regional Director at the Office accredited to the State concerned. States which had been evaluated might need assistance and follow-up action.

3.2 The Plenary emphasized the urgent need for States to participate in the AFCAC/ICAO search and rescue project and sought the cooperation amongst States in this regard. Additionally, States were encouraged to sign memoranda of understanding or agreements with each other to exchange and complement the services of each other in assistance of accidents. Many States were of the view that all African States should be actively involved in search and rescue programmes, particularly on a sub-regional basis. In this regard, resources should be pooled and cooperation between States and Organizations such as AFCAC and ASECNA strengthened. States should work toward common sub-regional approach that complements State Programme.

3.3 The Plenary requested the Secretariat to conduct a study on ways and means of developing improved cooperation between States, particularly with emphasis on search and rescue operations pertaining to coastal airports.

4 Advantages of the Project

4.1 While the task of implementing reliable SAR services in the economically constrained environment of developing countries is considerable, the opportunity presented by the project offers prospect of significant improvements. In meeting the challenge of improving their SAR systems, States may be assured of the continuing cooperation of AFCAC, ICAO and supporting donors.

5 Concomitant activities carried out

5.1 A training programme with specific packages is part of the project and will be carried out throughout its implementation. These packages are prepared in accordance with concerns expressed by a large number of States recommendation (s) formulated by Experts during the implementation of the project. Four sessions have so far taken place. The first session conducted in French was held at EAMAC (Niamey) from 2 to 6 December 2002 and was attended by 32 participants from 13 States. The second and fourth session conducted in English were held at ATA (Johannesburg) from 31 March to 4 April 2003 and from 13 to 24 June 2005 and were attended by 12 participants from 6 States and 13 participants from 11 States respectively. The third session conducted in French was held in Tunis from 6 to 7 September 2004 and was attended by 27 participants from 10 States. In addition, one training session in French is scheduled to be held in Niamey out during the current year.

5.2 An AFCAC/ICAO African wide seminar on funding SAR services in the AFI Region hosted by Senegal was held in Saly Portudal, from 25 to 28 October 2004. 120 participants from 50 States, International Organizations and private sector attended the seminar which adopted the “Saly Declaration on funding SAR services in the AFI Region.” (**Attached**).

5.3 A Group of African Experts was set up in order to come out with a comprehensive guideline materials which could assist African States in carrying out SAR exercise. The first meeting of this Group which has been so far working with cyber-connection is planned to be held before the end of the current year.

5.4 On 31 May and 1 June 2004, an International Seminar on SAR was organized and hosted by Algeria. African States are encouraged to take such initiatives in order to enable skilled specialists in SAR to exchange views which should be applied on daily basis at the duty station.

6 Proposed action

6.1 Bearing in mind the importance of this continental wide project, States which are not participating in the SAR project yet, are urged to expedite action in order to implement the APIRG/14 Conclusion 14/58. It is also proposed that APIRG/15 adopts the following draft conclusion relating to the Declaration referred to in the paragraph 5.2 above:

Draft Conclusion 15/... : African States are invited to implement the Declaration on funding Search and Rescue services in the AFI Region adopted by the AFCAC/ICAO Conference on SAR (Saly-Portudal, Senegal, 25 – 28 October 2004).

7. Action by the Meeting

7.1 The Meeting is invited to:

- a) note the information above;
- b) invite concerned States to urgently implement the APIRG/14 Conclusion 14/58;
and
- c) adopt the draft Conclusion above.

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